

# TDMHDD Update

## Betts, Carobene Assume MHDD Helm



Betts

Virginia Trotter Betts, MSN, JD, RN, FAAN, a leader in health and mental health policy for more than 30 years, was appointed commissioner of Mental

Health and Developmental Disabilities (TDMHDD) by Governor Phil Bredesen.

Betts recently served as Director for Health Policy and Professor of Nursing at the University of Tennessee (UT)

Health Science Center and is currently on an extended leave-of-absence from those positions. Prior to her UT appointment, Ms. Betts served as the Senior Advisor on Nursing and Policy to the Secretary and Assistant Secretary of Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

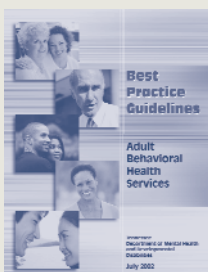
- She was actively engaged in the Surgeon General's initiatives on mental health including development of the Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent Suicide, Mental Health: a Report of the Surgeon General, and the national campaign to combat the stigma of mental illness.

- She headed the DHHS Interdepartmental Mental Health Policy Team which earned the 2000 DHHS Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service. Ms. Betts is an international expert on nursing and the health care workforce as well as mental health. She is a graduate of the University of Tennessee, the Vanderbilt School of Nursing, and the Nashville School of Law.

For a complete listing of Ms. Betts' highlights in her past positions and accomplishments, go to:  
<http://www.state.tn.us/mental/vtbbio.html>

## Best Practice Guidelines Published

Best Practice Guidelines (BPG), designed to improve patient care through aiding health professionals in providing consistent treatment and services for people with mental illness, has been published by the TDMHDD.



Neuroscience has emerged as a prime focus for studies of mental health and mental illness. Accordingly, integrative research that has emerged over the last decade has resulted in a variety of more effective treatments for mental illness. The publications detail current preferred

treatment protocols for children and adults who have mental illness. The newly published guidelines represent the collaborative efforts of a statewide committee of behavioral health experts who promulgated the Best Practice Guidelines based on national standards. As a result of this first time effort, TDMHDD will monitor treatment based on the guidelines across the state.

For further information, go to:  
<http://www.state.tn.us/mental/omd/omdbpg.html>

## Dishman Retires, Carobene Appointed

Upon the retirement of Deputy Commissioner Ben Dishman (effective March 31) who served for more than 20 years in the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities, Joe Carobene, Chief Officer of Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute (MTMHI), was appointed the new deputy commissioner.



Dishman

"Ben Dishman has been a rock for the department for many years, and I appreciate his staying in his post and helping me get through my first budget preparations," said Commissioner Betts. "Clearly his experience and knowledge about the department has been invaluable during the new administration transition. Joe has many of the same characteristics that I have found so invaluable in Ben. He has a true commitment to the

*Continued on page 2*

## Nashville Connection Achieves National Recognition

The Nashville Connection, an innovative system of care for children with serious emotional disturbance and their families, was nationally recognized for achievement in communications at the 2003 Excellence in Community Communications and Outreach (ECCO) Recognition Program, which took place in Portland, Ore. earlier this year.

The Nashville Connection, a service of Tennessee Voices for Children, competed with more than 117 entries submitted by mental health professionals and child advocates from across the country to earn recognition. The Nashville Connection's winning entries were: Gold recognition in Community Outreach for "Show Me You Care" poster; Gold recognition in Communications Training; Silver recognition in community outreach; and Silver recognition for "Erasing The Stigma," a Youth Outreach video.

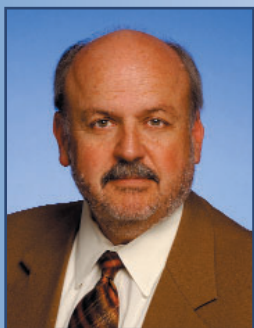
The ECCO Recognition Program is sponsored by the Comprehensive Mental Health Services for Children and Their Families Program of the Federal Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), Substance Abuse and Health Services Administration, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The ECCO Recognition Program highlights communications achievements that promote children's mental health. This honor also celebrates the talents, strengths, and successes of communities that are part of a CMHS grant program to build community-based "systems of care" for children with serious emotional disturbance and their families.



The Nashville Connection's service model includes family service coordinators that help families navigate the systems needed in the community to assure that children receive care in their home communities. Both formal services and informal community services are used. To date, the Nashville Connection has been very successful, children are remaining in their home communities and all of the children have been able to achieve in school placements.

For more information about the Nashville Connection and the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities initiative to promote systems of care for all children with serious emotional disturbance throughout Tennessee, contact: Lygia Williams, Technical Assistance Liaison, TDMHDD, 615-253-5078 or go to <http://www.state.tn.us/mental/mhs/soc7tnc.html>.

### Dishman Retires...continued



*Carobene*

department and the people that we serve. Joe shares my vision that this department, in conjunction with a committed governor and a partnership with many of the other cabinet officers, can achieve quality outcomes for the people that we serve with mental health and developmental disabilities."

Along with his role as Chief Officer of MTMHI, Carobene, resident of Clarksville, also served as the Interim

Superintendent at the Memphis Mental Health Institute (MMHI) from September 1999-May 2000. He also was Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services at Nashville-based Clover Bottom Developmental Center (CBDC) from March 1977-January 1989. Prior to that appointment, Carobene served as Acting Superintendent at Lakeshore Mental Health Institute (LMHI) in Knoxville from November 1982-April 1983.

## DMHDD Celebrates 50 Years

On March 13, 1953, Governor Frank G. Clement signed House Bill 242 of the 78th General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, providing for the creation of a Department of Mental Health and for the appointment of a commissioner and a board of trustees.

Fifty years later, the department continues its role of setting policy and quality standards for people of all ages who have mental illness, serious emotional disturbance or developmental disability.

More department history will be included in the next issue of "Update."





## Alzheimer's May Be Preventable, Treatable

About half of all people 85 and older are affected with Alzheimer's disease, says the National Institute on Aging. But what was once considered a normal part of aging, may be preventable and possibly treatable.

Here are some recent findings:

- Depression appears to be a factor. A seven-year study of nuns, priests, and brothers, shows that those who reported the most symptoms of depression had the highest risk of developing Alzheimer's.
- Neuropsychologists at Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center in Chicago say it pays to get treatment for depression and treatment for chronic stress that can lead to depression.
- Vitamins and anti-inflammatories may aid in prevention. Drugs being studied as potential shields from Alzheimer's include vitamin E, anti-inflammatories, and vitamins B6, B12, and folic acid.



- Protecting your heart is good for your brain. High blood pressure, high cholesterol, lack of exercise, and other contributors to heart disease are also present in Alzheimer's patients. High blood levels of homocysteine (an amino acid that is a by product of red meat)

contribute to heart disease and Alzheimer's, say neurologists at Wake Forest University.

Homocysteine levels are controlled by eating foods with vitamins B6, B12, and folic acid, which break down the amino acid.

- An occasional glass of wine lowers the risk of developing Alzheimer's. Researchers in Copenhagen found that those who drank wine weekly or even monthly were significantly less likely to develop dementia than those who drank beer. But those who drank beer once a month were twice as likely to develop dementia as those who hardly ever drank beer.

Many people believe that memory problems are inevitable. Remind your parents that this is not the case.

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## Gene/Depression Link Found

Scientists at Myriad Genetics of Salt Lake City have identified a gene that causes depression. The finding could revolutionize treatment of the condition.

Myriad and Abbott Laboratories are working to develop a new class of antidepressants. Currently used medicines such as Prozac work on 70 percent of patients, but 30 percent don't

improve. Of those who do, as many as half still suffer some symptoms of depression in spite of the medication.

Though this is an exciting development, there could be several genes involved in this complex disease. New medications could take some time to develop.